



(U//FOUO) Making SIGINT Sharable -- The Database *Is* the Report

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SID taking steps to standardize SIGINT database access by customers (S//SI)

(U//FOUO) Over the years, NSA analysts have found creative ways to capture knowledge of their targets, from index cards in wooden boxes to homegrown databases. This knowledge, or how we know what we know, is often what customers have in mind when they ask for "raw SIGINT." What if we could capitalize on the time and effort put into documenting this knowledge and find an easy and effective way to share it?

(U//FOUO) Allowing customers to access the information in our databases -- instead of SID disseminating it to them narratively -- has many benefits. An interactive mechanism for retrieving the data allows the customers to get the specific information they need, when they need it. This format is more useful to them, because they can manipulate and analyze information themselves. This also reduces the need for SID analysts to issue product reports and respond to RFIs* -- saving time and effort.

(U//FOUO) For example, a directory of target-related facilities naturally lends itself to a database structure. Rapidly changing sets of information are not easily shared via traditional product reports: adding two names to a list of four hundred can be a difficult task. With "Database Reporting", however, it's simply a built-in feature.

(S//SI) In July 2001, a joint S1/S2 team completed development of the PRC Defense Industries database-reporting prototype (FIDIR**), which is accessible to external customers via Intelink. Valuable intelligence that is typically gathered in a target office database was made available to both internal Agency analysts and customers throughout the Intelligence Community. **This represents NSA's first instance of Intelink-base database COMINT reporting.**

(S//SI) The prototype was a first step towards defining a "standardized" way of sharing SIGINT fact. The next iteration, SCORPIOFORE, provides database reporting via NSAnet with planned releases on Intelink and the Second Party Mail. The concept was introduced in March 2002 as an interim-solution database reporting initiative on Iranian nuclear proliferation procurement activities. It was in response to stated customer needs and information gaps on this high priority target. OpSIGINT worked in partnership with S1 and S2 to create SCORPIOFORE, which should be available in the next few months.

(S//SI) S1 is currently working on a scalable solution of this new concept which could be applied to many different data sources. (More about this new architecture called 4S -- Structured SIGINT Sharing Space -- is available at [REDACTED] or "go 4S".)

(S//SI) The ability to share SIGINT fact via Database Reporting will not replace narrative reporting altogether; however, it does facilitate information sharing and provides a powerful vehicle for analysts to add more information into shared analytic space.

(S//SI) Notes:

* RFI = Request for Information

** FIDIR = Factories and Institutes Directory

(U) Do you have comments on this topic? Use the suggestions/comments button below, or submit a "letter to the editor" (using the "Submit an Item" function on the right-hand side of the SID today homepage).

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